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## University of Bath

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## Suicide rates in children and young people increase

Dear Sir

The Office for National Statistics published the UK suicide rates for the year ended 2014 on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2016 <sup>1</sup>. Overall, there were 6.122 suicides in the UK, 120 (2%) fewer than in 2013. For the first time, data on deaths from intentional self-harm in children aged 10-14 has been included. The publication of these figures is welcomed and provides important information for public health and child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) about suicide rates in children and adolescents <sup>2</sup>.

During 2014 there were 13 intentional deaths in children aged 10-14 with a further 11 where intent could not be determined <sup>1</sup>. Across the wider age range of children and adolescents (aged 10-19) the data revealed 201 intentional deaths, a 12-14% increase from 2013 (n=179) and 2012 (n=176) <sup>3</sup>.

With small numbers trends can be over or under inflated by a few cases so these statistics need to be interpreted cautiously. Nonetheless these figures indicate an increase in suicide rates in children and young people in 2014 with up to two children (aged 10-14) and 15 young people (aged 15-19) in the UK committing suicide each month. Future statistical releases will establish whether there is a rising trend in suicides amongst children and young people. In the meantime public health and CAMHS should explore the provision of effective school-based universal suicide prevention programmes <sup>4</sup>.

Professor Paul Stallard, University of Bath and Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

No Competing Interests

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